"Glory of Going On"

GERTRUDE PAHLOW is a writer who does not loiter by the way when she has a theme to present. In the case of her latest novel, *The Glory of Going On*, it was her purpose to describe the career of the heroine between the ages of 15 and somewhere beyond 40. The author takes just 306 pages to do it in. This displays signal brevity in a modern writer. One has but to remember the Jacob Stahl books and consider the lengths to which J. D. Beresford went or Compton Mackenzie's Sylvia Scarlett tomes or—or, well, any English writer of prominence. Fashions in fiction are popular, and like fashions in clothes continually dip into the past for something old and then call it new. The three decker novel was no curiosity in ages agone. One has but to pore through Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa Harlowe* or *Sir Charles Grandison* or *Pamela*. There started a fashion that Time has never eradicated from the world of books, although the practice in certain eras sank into desuetude. The early Victorian period knew it. And with a certain group of English writers it returned again. It has its virtues and it has its faults.

Miss Pahlow, however, ambitiously restrains herself from a too great prodigality of space. Because of the theme she has undertaken it could not but make her treatment of it episodic. But she has done this gracefully enough, slurring over the undramatic years of Hilda Vincent's life with a nice skill and selecting those crowning moments, some glad, some tragic, that best enlarge her subject. The title of the book plainly labels its contents.

Hilda Vincent first appears as a child of 15 going to her first dance. She passes through the religious phase with celerity, develops her butterfly attitude and finally dedicates herself to her art, in this case—music. Peter Cabot Lane, he of the old New England antecedents and the brilliant literary gifts, loves her, but she will have nothing to do with love, and finally sends the too importunate Peter away. When Hilda's failure as a singer comes, principally, we gather, through faulty teaching, her powers of resistance weaken. She is attacked by a man and promptly saved by an utter stranger. Ten days later she has promised to marry this stranger.

Then follow unhappy years of married life, the rise of Peter to fame and Hilda's realization that she loves him alone, the return of Peter and the confession of this love but not before a child is born, Hilda's divorce from her unfaithful husband shortly after a second child is born, her eventual marriage with Peter (impatiently awaited by the reader through many a chapter), the war and Peter's death in France, and a final settling down as a teacher of singing in a school.

The action moves with extreme rapidity, as indeed it must in such circumscribed space, but it covers the ground with some degree of completeness. Just what the author has tried to prove remains in doubt. Hilda certainly made her mistakes, and some of them were quite grave and obviously fraught with disaster. Her uncalled for marriage is never quite explained satisfactorily. The character that the author leads the reader to believe Hilda is does not warrant it. Then there is the literary note. For the most part Miss Pahlow is admittedly good, but there are certain lapses into bald truisms and oversaccharinity that could well be removed with no damage to the theme. The light, playful conversations between Peter and Hilda, for instance, get banal after a while. Sentiment sways Miss Pahlow's reason more than once.

THE GLORY OF GOING ON. By Gertrude Pahlow. Duffield & Co.

"Sapper," author of "Mufti." Otherwise Cyril McNeile.

By N. P. D.

THE English artillery officer who writes under the name of "Sapper." and whose real romantic name is said to be Cyril McNeile, is the author of several volumes of war stories and sketches that have been enormously popular in England; more popular in England than here. But no better stories of the war than some of Sapper's were written anywhere. An odd thing about them was that you never believed in them for a minute, being quite obviously and melodramatically fiction. But this did not seem to make any difference. They might, and doubtless should, have been true. At least, with his light and ironic method—the truly British way of carrying a big thing off lightly, as if nobody cared—"Sapper" had no difficulty in thrilling his readers, and his stories might well have carried them into the thick and the heart of the war more than others less highly colored.

But how about *Mufti*, a new novel by "Sapper"? Hugh Walpole, who keeps our readers informed about Bocks and the Book World in London, lists *Mufti* as one of the six financial successes of the season. Mr. Walpole does not say, we should be careful to note, that *Mufti* is one of the six books he himself has liked the most, or even that it is one of the six "best" books—he has other lists for these. But it is a curious fact that in England, where some of the best fiction in the world is written, judging from prize contests and book stall displays, some of the worst fiction is read.

Mufti is a curious mixture. Some of it reads almost like a caricature of the cheapest romantic stuff of fiction, if not the stuff itself. The hero addresses the girl as "Lady" or "Grey Lady." The heroine calls the hero "boy" in such sentences as these:

"I went down there the morning after Our Day—oh, my God! boy, how I loved that time. . . ."

"Oh! Boy—— What Hell it all is, what utter Hell!"

Joan is an original girl. She says: "If I want to do a thing—I generally do it. For instance, if I want to go and talk to a man in his rooms, I do so." She does it. But she had not counted on the nobility of the hero. After watching over her tenderly while she slept as heroines miraculously are able to sleep on such occasions—he picks her up and carries her back where she belongs.

"Utterly exhausted and worn out, she barely woke up when he placed her in her own cold bed. Her eyes opened drowisly (sic) once, and he bent over her and kissed her gently.

"'Little Joan,' he whispered. 'Dear little grey girl.'"

"But she did not hear him. With a tired sigh she had drifted off to sleep again."

What makes *Mufti* the hodge-podge it is, however, is that in with such romantic drivel the author lightly turns to thoughts of labor and the land question and the rights of inheritance in England. The "dear little grey girl," for all her personal radicalism, is an out and out conservative and reactionary when it comes to "Blandford," her "ancesterl" home as Daisy would say, and which she tells the hero is "ours and always has been ours," and always must be ours if Joan has to marry a fat and middle aged millionaire to keep it.

A labor leader in the story gives labor's side of the question, but the most interesting character in the whole book, to our mind, is a dog. It is pretty hard to spoil a dog. Even Joan behaves more sensibly when she comes into contact with Binkie. Instead of forcing acquaintance, going to see him in his rooms as you might say, the first time she meets him, she lets her hand hang loosely just in front of his nose, with the back toward him. "Vane nodded approvingly; as a keen dog lover it pleased him intensely to see that the girl knew how to make friends with them."

"Sapper" is more interesting when he describes Binkie's fierce combat with an india rubber dog than he is in discussing strikes and revolution. In the description of the hospital and the air raid he is also at his best. It is in the hospital that we meet Margaret, who had broken with Vane when she learned "about the girl he was keeping." But that was before the war, and now we have changed all that. Margaret says: "I think I realize rather more than I did what men are. . . . One doesn't make them up out of books now. All this has taught one to understand a man's temptations—to forgive him when he fails."

Yet this is exactly what the clever "Sapper" has done with the characters in his story—made them up out of books. It is hard on Wells and Galsworthy that he represents his hero as having been reading them. Having a kindly feeling for "Sapper" we shall prefer to think hard of *Men, Women and Guns* and *Michael Cassidy, Sergeant*, and try to forget *Mufti*, which brings the melancholy reflection that every little country apparently must have a robertwehambers all its own.

MUFTI. By "Sapper" (Cyril McNeile). George H. Doran Company.

EXTRA! &c! The latest is an authors' scheme to found an authors' publishing company on the ground that the regular publishers get too much of the money from a book. We venture the opinion that such a concern will succeed only if it limits itself to a group of best selling authors. The six writers who have gone into the movie business as Eminent Authors, Inc., or any similar six, could undoubtedly set up as book publishers—of their own books—and reap publishers' profits. But the moment they go beyond the sure-thing of their own fiction they'll lose money, sometimes, and they'll find themselves with nothing sure except their regular royalties.

A PLAY by Winston Churchill, *Dr. Jonathan*, is about to be published by the Macmillan Company. It deals with the question of industrial democracy.

"Peace and Business"

THE now familiar formula for writing "big business" stories has now been applied by Isaac F. Marcosson to the aftermath of the war. He sees the methods of cooperation and efficiency applied by "big business" to its affairs being used by some of the Governments abroad as the only means of safely winning through to political and social security. And in the pages of *Peace and Business* he tells his readers, who may not have read his text in serial publication, what Great Britain is doing to turn successfully from military to commercial wars, discusses *France and the Future*, and takes up in turn the affairs of Holland, Switzerland, Germany, Italy and our own from the viewpoint of the international trade relations of these countries.

The picture Mr. Marcosson draws of the far seeing plans of Great Britain's political and commercial leaders for her commercial and industrial future is very impressive. But to a regular and unprejudiced reader of the London *Times* the picture does not compare with the reality. British statesmen and industrial leaders planned mightily for what she is to do again as a greater trade power than ever. But the workingmen of England in particular do not seem to fall into these schemes readily, and it is no exaggeration to say that in the industrial and social sense England is in a parlous state. Our "war scandals" are practically things of the past. England's are in hideous bloom and seem to be growing in noisomeness every day. One may well wonder if the plans Mr. Marcosson outlines in his pages will overcome England's deep seated industrial and social troubles in spite of all his optimism.

This writer sees in the presence of American troops in France during the war an effect of making France a little more responsive to modern progress than she was before August, 1914. We hope his ideas on this subject are more impressive than his A. E. F. transportation geography, for it is not very convincing to read that when America came into the war "she had to take the Atlantic gateways in the south." Brest, St. Nazaire and Bordeaux are not very much in the south. And when he says that our lines of communication "had to extend practically from the Mediterranean to Alsace-Lorraine" he creates an impression of looseness of statement, to say the least. The discussion of *The German in Spain* is a thoroughly familiar tale that leads nowhere to-day, and his reply to the question *Can Germany Come Back?* is chiefly reminiscent and overshadowed by the old bogy of German efficiency. The chapter on *America's Opportunity* is also reminiscent and preaches the doctrine that "business lies at the root of everything."

It does. But back of "business" is a still greater need. This is that the work of individual men and women should be done better than it is being done to-day and that more of it should be done. Instead of talking and writing about industrial and social reforms and big business and its ways, what the world needs is some good straight talk about the need of people working harder, working more effectively, working more conscientiously than they are doing now. What the world needs more than anything else to-day is just plain, old fashioned, conscientious *hard work*.

PEACE AND BUSINESS. By Isaac F. Marcosson. John Lane Company.